

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-38. (Cancel).

39. (Currently Amended) A retractable strap device for a carry case, which comprises:

- a) a flexible strap having at least first and second end portions; and
- b) at least a first strap retractor device mounted to at least a first part of the carry case, said first strap retractor device including at least two coil-type extension springs and arranged to bias said first end portion of said strap toward a retracted position with respect to the carry case, said first retractor device having means associated therewith for take-up and storage of at least a portion of said strap, and at least a second strap retractor device mounted to a second part of the carry case and including at least two coil-type extension springs, said second strap retractor device arranged to bias [[a]] said second end portion of said strap generally opposite to said first end portion of said strap and having means associated therewith for take-up and storage of at least a portion of said strap.

40. (Cancelled).

41. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim [[40]] 39, wherein said second end portion of said strap is coupled to said second strap retractor device.

42. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim 41, wherein said extension springs of said second strap retractor device are coupled to said second end portion of said strap.

43. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim 41, wherein each said first and second strap retractor device includes at least three coil-type extension springs.

44. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim 41, wherein each said first and second strap retractor device comprises a housing and each said extension spring is retained within said housing, each said spring having a first end coupled to said housing and a second end coupled to a slider device, said slider devices adapted to selectively take-up and extend said strap in response to forces applied to said strap.

45. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim 44, wherein each end of said ~~respective~~ strap is coupled to a respective slider device, and each said slider device is coupled to said respective extension springs, each said slider device defining an aperture for passage therethrough of said strap, such that when said strap is extended in a direction away from the carry case, said springs are extended, and when said strap is relaxed, said springs retract and cause said strap to retract and be stored within said housing.

46. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim 45, wherein each said retractor housing includes a fixed elongated member oriented transversely to said strap, and each said first and second end portions of said strap is respectively ~~wrapped around~~ coupled to a respective elongated member attached to a respective housing.

47. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim 46, wherein each said first and second end portion of said strap is respectively wrapped around said associated fixed elongated member within said associated housing and looped through said aperture in said respective slider device for storage of at least a portion of said strap within each said respective housing.

48. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim 47, wherein each said slider device associated with each said housing defines at least two apertures for reception of each respective end portion of said strap in a double looped manner to thereby increase the amount of strap storage capacity within said housing.

49. (Previously Presented) The retractable strap device according to Claim 48, wherein each said housing includes resilient means positioned to be engaged by said slider device to absorb and store energy when said strap is extended to a position which causes said slider device to reach a predetermined location.

50. (Previously Presented) The retractable strap device according to Claim 49, wherein each said housing forms at least a part of a frame structure for the carry case and is concealed within a part of the carry case.

51. (Previously Presented) The retractable strap device according to Claim 50, further comprising a locking device adapted to prevent said strap from sliding movement relative to said strap retractor device.

52. (Previously Presented) The retractable strap device according to Claim 51, wherein said locking device comprises a first slotted block and a second slotted block, said strap passing through both said slotted blocks, at least one of said blocks being movable laterally with respect to the other to lock the position of said carry strap at a selected location on said strap to prevent further movement of said strap into said respective retractor device.

53. (Currently Amended) A retractor strap device for a carry case, which comprises:

a) a housing mounted on at least one side of the carry case ~~and forming part of the framework structure of the carry case~~, said housing being subdivided into at least

two sections, a first section associated with one end portion of a carry strap, and a second section associated with a second end portion of said carry strap;

b) at least two coil-type extension springs positioned in each ~~sections of said housing~~ section and having one end coupled to said housing and a second end coupled to a slider device, each said slider device ~~being coupled to respective opposed portions of said carry strap and~~ defining an opening for reception of a portion of said carry strap; and

c) an elongated member fixedly attached to each section of said housing and oriented transverse to said carry strap, said elongated member being spaced from said respective slider device and being positioned to receive a portion of said strap wrapped therearound such that ~~applying~~ application of opposed forces to said respective end portions of said carry strap causes said carry strap to extend its exposed length as said extension springs become extended, and releasing said opposed forces on said carry strap permits said extension springs to ~~apply inward and~~ retract and apply opposed resilient forces to said end portions of said carry strap to cause ~~[[said]]~~ opposed portions of said carry strap to return to their stored positions within said housing.

54. (Previously Presented) The retractable strap device according to Claim 53, wherein each said first and second sections of said housing includes at least three coil-type extension springs.

55. (Currently Amended) A retractable strap device for a carry case, which comprises:

a) a housing mounted on each ~~[[side]]~~ of two opposite sides of the carry case ~~and forming part of the frame structure of the carry case; and~~

b) means associated with each said housing for take-up and storage of at least a portion of said strap;

[[b]] c) at least two coil-type extension springs mounted within each said housing and respectively coupled to opposed end portions of a flexible carry strap, said springs adapted to cause [[two]] the respective opposed end portions of [[a]] said carry strap to be retracted within said housing when each said spring retracts, and to permit each end portion of said carry strap to be extended in directions opposed to each said spring when extension forces are applied to each end of said carry strap, thereby causing at least respective portions of said strap to exit each said housing.

56. (Currently Amended) A retractable strap device for a carry case, which comprises:

a) a flexible strap having a central portion and at least first and second end portions;

b) at least one first strap retractor device mounted on at least one first side of the carry case, said strap retractor device having a first housing and at least two resilient coil-type extension springs coupled at one end thereof to said housing, and at another end thereof to one end portion of said flexible strap; and

c) at least one second strap retractor device mounted to at least one second side of the carry case, said second side of the carry case being generally opposite said first side, said second strap retractor device having a second housing and at least two resilient coil-type extension springs coupled at one end thereof to said housing, and at another end thereof to said second end portion of said flexible strap,

whereby said first and second end portions of said flexible strap are retracted into each said respective housing by inward forces provided by said resilient springs, and

when outward forces are applied to said flexible strap to cause said first and second end portions to move away from said ~~retractable devices~~ first and second housings, said springs become extended so as to permit outward movement of said strap away from the carry case, while providing resilient return force to said strap, such that when said outward forces are removed, each said end portions of said flexible strap returns to respective stored positions within each respective housing and said central portion of said strap between said opposed end portions assumes a position closer to the carry case.

57. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim 56, wherein each said housing is an elongated member having at least three sides, a first side having ~~devices~~ means to attach one end of each said springs thereto.

58. (Previously Presented) The retractable strap device according to Claim 57, wherein said first side of each said housing is shorter than said second and third sides.

59. (Previously Presented) The retractable strap device according to Claim 58, wherein said strap retractor device includes a slider device coupled to the opposite ends of said springs, and one end of said flexible strap is attached to said slider device.

60. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim 59, wherein an elongated pin is attached to each said housing and oriented in a direction generally transverse to the direction of movement of said flexible strap, said strap ~~being-looped~~ looping around said pin and through an aperture in said slider device, and thereafter ~~[[exits]]~~ exiting said housing such that outward forces applied to said strap cause said strap to be withdrawn from said housing against the forces provided by said springs, and relaxation of said outward forces causes said springs to return to their unloaded

condition, and said end portions of said strap to return to a stored and wrapped position within each said ~~housings~~ housing.

61. (Previously Presented) The retractable strap device according to Claim 60, wherein each said slider device defines two apertures to receive said flexible strap in a double-wrapped arrangement.

62. (Previously Presented) The retractable strap device according to Claim 61, wherein each said housing is made of a plastic material.

63. (Previously Presented) The retractable strap device according to Claim 62, wherein said plastic material is polypropylene or acrylonitrile-butadiene styrene.

64. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim 63, wherein each said slider device comprises a pair of engagement pads at each end thereof, and each said housing includes a pair of impact springs positioned and adapted to be engaged by said pads when said respective slider device is moved to a predetermined position, whereby said impact springs absorb and store energy from each said slider device when said flexible strap is extended away from the carry case to a predetermined position.

65. (Previously Presented) The retractable strap device according to Claim 64, wherein said flexible strap extends through a strap locking device, said locking device comprising a first fixed block and a second slider block movable between a first position which permits passage of said strap through respective apertures in said blocks, and a second position of misalignment of said apertures which prevents passage of said strap through said block.

66. (Currently Amended) The retractable strap device according to Claim 65, wherein said slider block comprises a manually operable pin attached thereto and said block is manually actuable by [[a]] said manually operable pin attached thereto.

67. (Currently Amended) A carry case having a retractable strap device, which comprises:

~~a) — a carry case;~~

[[b)]] a) a flexible strap having at least first and second end portions;

and

[[c)]] b) at least one first strap retractor device mounted to at least a first part of said carry case, said strap retractor device including at least two coil-type extensions springs respectively attached to a first portion of said strap to bias said strap toward a retracted position with respect to the carry case, and a second portion of said strap opposed to said first portion [[and]] being attached to a correspondingly opposed second part of said carry case, said first strap retractor device having means for take-up and storage of at least a portion of said flexible strap.

68. (Currently Amended) The carry case according to Claim 67, wherein a second strap retractor device is attached to a second part of the carry case opposed to said first part, and a second end portion of said strap is attached to said second retractor device, said second strap retractor device having means for take-up and storage of at least a portion of said strap.

69. (Currently Amended) The carry case according to Claim 68, wherein said first and second retractor strap devices are mounted to a frame structure of the carry case and concealed within respective parts of the carry case.

70. (Currently Amended) A method of providing a retractable carry strap for a carry case, which comprises:

a) providing a flexible strap having first and second end portions;



b) coupling one first end of said flexible strap to a first strap retractor device, said first strap retractor device including at least two coil-type extension springs arranged to bias said first end of said strap toward said first retractor device;

c) mounting said first strap retractor device ~~[[on]]~~ to a first part of the carry case;

d) coupling said second end portion of said strap to a second strap retractor device, said second strap retractor device including at least two coil-type-extension springs arranged to bias said second end portion of said strap toward said second strap retractor device; and

e) mounting said second retractor device ~~[[on]]~~ to a second part of the carry case opposite the first part of the carry case.

71. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 70, wherein the carry case has a frame structure and said first and second retractor devices are mounted to said frame structure.

72. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 71, further comprising concealing said first and second strap retractor devices within said respective first and second parts of the carry case.

73. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 72, wherein the carry case is an item of luggage.

74. (Currently Amended) The ~~retractable strap device~~ method according to Claim 73, wherein each said retractor strap device comprises a housing and each said extension spring is retained within said housing, each said spring having a first end coupled to said housing and a second end coupled to a slider device, said slider device adapted to selectively take-up and extend said strap in response to forces applied to said strap.

75. (Currently Amended) The ~~retractable strap device~~ method according to Claim 74, wherein each end of said strap is coupled to a respective slider device, and each said slider device is coupled to said extension springs, each said slider device defining an aperture for passage of said strap therethrough, such that when said strap is extended in a direction away from the carry case, said springs are extended, and when said strap is relaxed, said springs retract and cause said strap to retract and be stored within said housing.

76. (Currently Amended) The ~~retractable strap device~~ method according to Claim 75, wherein each said retractor housing includes a fixed elongated member oriented transversely to said strap, and each said first and second end portions of said strap is respectively attached to a respective elongated member attached to a respective housing.

77. (Currently Amended) The ~~retractable strap device~~ method according to Claim 76, wherein each end portion of said strap is respectively wrapped around said associated fixed elongated member within said associated housing and looped through said aperture in said respective slider device for storage of at least a portion of said strap within each said respective housing.

78. (Currently Amended) The ~~retractable strap device~~ method according to Claim 77, wherein each said slider device associated with each said housing defines two apertures for reception of each respective end portion of said strap in a double looped manner to thereby increase the amount of strap storage capacity within said housing.

79. (Currently Amended) The ~~retractable strap device~~ method according to Claim 78, wherein each said housing includes resilient means positioned to be engaged by said slider device to absorb and store energy when said strap is extended to a position which causes said slider device to reach a predetermined location.

80. (Currently Amended) The ~~retractable strap device~~ method according to Claim 79, wherein each said housing forms at least a part of a frame structure for the carry case and is concealed within a part of the carry case.

81. (Currently Amended) The ~~retractable strap device~~ method according to Claim 80, further comprising a locking device adapted to prevent said strap from sliding movement relative to said retractor device.

82. (Currently Amended) The ~~retractable strap device~~ method according to Claim 81, wherein said locking device comprises a first slotted block and a second slotted block, said strap passing through both said slotted blocks, at least one of said blocks being movable laterally with respect to the other to lock the position of said strap at a selected location on said strap to prevent further movement of said strap into said respective retractor device.

83. (New) A carry case having a retractable strap device, which comprises:

- a) a flexible strap having at least first and second end portions; and
- b) at least a first strap retractor device mounted to at least a first part of the carry case, said first strap retractor device including at least two coil-type extension springs and arranged to bias said first end portion of said strap toward a retracted position with respect to the carry case, said first retractor device having means associated therewith for take-up and storage of at least a portion of said strap, and at least a second strap retractor device mounted to a second part of the carry case and including at least two coil-type extension springs, said second strap retractor device arranged to bias said second end portion of said strap generally opposite to said first portion of said strap and having means associated therewith for take-up and storage of at least a portion of said strap.